

**Online  
Q&A for  
Cooperative  
Education  
Programs  
in  
Career and  
Technical  
Education**



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## Cooperative Education: Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q. *What is Cooperative Education?*  
A. Cooperative Education is a type of work-based learning. It consists of in-school instruction in a specific field within a program area combined with a paid on-the-job experience in a related business or industry. Cooperative Education may be a component of any program area in Career and Technical Education including: agriculture, business education, family and consumer sciences, health science, marketing, information technology, industrial education (construction, transportation, manufacturing and communication clusters), technology education, and pathway to careers.
2. Q. *What is the purpose of Cooperative Education Programs?*  
A. The purpose is to develop occupational competence reinforced by a real-life job experience. The school selects a training partner that will provide and coordinate occupational experiences needed by the students to achieve career goals.
3. Q. *At what grade levels may students participate in Cooperative Education?*  
A. 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades (preferably at the 12<sup>th</sup> grade)
4. Q. *What requirements must schools meet to offer Cooperative Education?*  
A. Schools must--
  - Identify in school catalog and other publications that Cooperative Education is an integral part of the school's program of studies;
  - Ensure that students in local schools are enrolled in a preparatory educational course (related class) within the current school year;
  - Ensure that students in state operated Area Technology Centers are concurrently enrolled in a Career and Technical Education course at the time they are participating in Cooperative Education;
  - Recognize that on-the-job training supplements the planned program of in-school instruction;
  - Arrange with the employer for the on-the-job training utilizing a Training Plan;
  - Develop and keep a Training Plan on file for each student.
  - Coordinate and plan time for staff to visit work sites;
  - Award credit for students participating in class and related work experience;
  - Provide a process for evaluating the effectiveness of the program;
  - Identify guidelines and procedures relating to school policies such as attendance, student transportation to and from work sites, insurance, and grading procedures; and
  - Provide employment opportunities for all types of students regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, religion, and marital status.

5. *Q. What are the guidelines for students in Cooperative Education in relation to hours worked on a daily basis, days of the week a student may work, and hours per week?*
- A. Local school districts set policies regarding acceptable hours for Cooperative Education during the school year and summer months. If a student works additional hours including nights and weekends, this work must fall within guidelines of Child Labor Laws. Students enrolled in state operated Area Technology Centers may co-op up to three hours per day and five days per week during regular school hours as identified in the Training Plan.**
6. *Q. What are the requirements students must meet to participate in Cooperative Education?*
- A. Students in Cooperative Education must meet the following requirements:**
- **Be enrolled in a related class during the school year;**
  - **Complete the basic skill prerequisites required by the occupational program and be recommended by the teacher before placement in Cooperative Education;**
  - **Have proof of age on file with the employer. This proof may be a birth certificate, baptismal or other records. Students under age 18 must comply with special labor laws; and**
  - **Spend a minimum of ten (10) clock hours per week in a salaried position that provides work experience directly related to students career goals.**
7. *Q. How is credit awarded for Cooperative Education?*
- A. Credit is contingent upon two factors: 1) related class and 2) time spent on the job or an equivalent amount of time based on daily work schedules identified in the Training Plan. Credit may be awarded for both the related class and work-site experiences. The credit for work-site experiences is to be determined at the district and/or school level and may be awarded based on the number of hours students are working in business and industry.**
8. *Q. How are students compensated for work related to Cooperative Education?*
- A. The student receives a salary for the work experience performed at the site; therefore, an employer/employee relationship is established and students must receive at least minimum wage.**
9. *Q. What is the school's responsibility in coordinating the supervision of students at the work site?*
- A. The school is to provide time for a certified teacher-coordinator to make visits to the work site for the purpose of assessing student progress, coordinating related instruction with job experiences, making changes in training plans when necessary, and improving the quality of the experience.**
10. *Q. What certified school personnel can provide supervision for students at the work site?*
- A.**
- **Teacher of related class**
  - **Designated Cooperative Education Coordinator/Teacher**
  - **Administrator**



11. *Q. What guidelines should schools follow regarding insurance and transportation?*

**A. Insurance**

- **Students in Cooperative Education are to be covered by Workers' Compensation. The employer should provide a certificate to schools verifying they are providing this coverage.**
- **Students participating in the Cooperative Education program must be covered by accident insurance. This coverage may be provided through school insurance purchased by the student, parent, or guardian. Students covered by personal/family insurance must provide a certificate of insurance to school staff to certify this coverage.**
- **Students enrolled in Cooperative Education Programs in state operated Area Technology Centers are insured through an accident policy carried by the Office of Career and Technical Education. However, this insurance is secondary in nature. Other insurance coverage is considered primary, and the student insurance may pay only a fraction of the actual medical cost.**

**Transportation**

- **Procedures and policies are to be in line with school policies.**
- **Proof of driver's license and insurance is required if student is allowed to drive to the work site.**
- **Permission is to be provided by parent/guardian for students to ride with other students driving personal vehicles.**

12. *Q. What guidelines can schools use to determine the numbers of Cooperative Education students a teacher / coordinator may supervise?*

**A. The number of students a teacher/coordinator may supervise is contingent upon two factors: 1) number of students in Cooperative Education Programs, 2) and time allotted for supervision responsibilities. One criterion which may relate to the number of students a teacher/ coordinator may supervise is Kentucky Administrative Regulation 3:231, General Program Standards for Secondary and Technical Programs which states:**

1. **"The maximum number of students per class shall be based on:**
  - a classroom setting, the maximum shall be thirty-one**
  - a laboratory or shop setting, the number enrolled in a class shall not exceed the number of work stations in the facility."**

13. *Q. What labor laws impact Cooperative Education?*

**A. Kentucky and federal laws apply to students working in the Cooperative Education Program. Specifics depend on the student's age. See Chapter 2, Legal Issues in *Work-Based Learning Guide 2000*, Kentucky Division of Career & Technical Education ([www.education.gov](http://www.education.gov)), Kentucky Labor Cabinet (<http://www.kylabor.net>), and Workers' Compensation (<http://www.labor.ky.gov/dwc>)**

14. Q. *What is the definition of student learners in relation to hazardous occupations and how does this definition impact Cooperative Education?*

- A. A student learner is an individual who is enrolled in a course of study and training in a cooperative vocational program under a recognized state or local educational authority.
- The U.S. Department of Labor and Kentucky provide for an exemption for "student learners" through a written agreement to Cooperative Education in the following hazardous occupations: \*
  - Operation of a Power-Driven Woodworking Machine
  - Operation of Power-Driven Metal Forming, Punching, and Shearing Machine
  - Slaughtering, Meat Packing, Processing, and Rendering
  - Operation of Paper Products Machines
  - Operation of Circular Saws, Band Saws, and Guillotine Shears
  - Roofing Operations
- \* See p. 240 of the *KDE Work-Based Learning Guide and Child Labor Bulletin 101* pp. 18-19.

15. Q. *How does Cooperative Education differ from Practicum and Perkins Work Study?*

A. **Practicum**

Practicum is a type of work-based learning used in Career and Technical Education both at the state operated Area Technology Centers and in some local school districts. In local school districts, practicum is used in Health Science programs. In these programs, practicum is designed for seniors following completion of at least three courses from the Health Science program of study. The practicum is to provide a combination of work, observation, and discussion in a setting that enables the student to gain experience in areas of special interest such as physical therapy, pharmacy, and a clinical laboratory. Students in a practicum experience are supervised and evaluated by a pre-approved site coordinator. These non-paid experiences are to be combined with a required journal, weekly meeting with the health science teacher and provides for feedback from site-coordinator.

**Perkins Work Study**

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Technical Education Act of 1998 permits the use of funds to provide work study opportunities. Work study is to supplement part-time employment for youth who have an educational barrier and are enrolled in Career and Technical Education.

16. Q. *Where can I find additional information regarding Cooperative Education?*

A. **Resource Materials and Web-Sites**

1. Administrative Regulation: Cooperative Education Program Standards, 705 KAR 4:041 [www.lrc.state.ky.us/KAR/705/004/041.htm](http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/KAR/705/004/041.htm)

2. Administrative Regulation Kentucky Child Labor Laws 803 KAR 1:00  
[www.lrc.state.ky.us/KAR/803/001/100.htm](http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/KAR/803/001/100.htm)
3. Child Labor Requirements in Non-Agricultural Occupations under the Fair Labor Standards Act (Child Labor Bulletin 101) US Department of Labor  
[www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov)
4. Cooperative Education Guide: Office of Career and Technical Education (under revision)  
[www.kyTech.ky.gov](http://www.kyTech.ky.gov)
5. Cooperative Education Brochure: Office of Career and Technical Education (under revision)  
[www.kyTech.ky.gov](http://www.kyTech.ky.gov)
6. Program Assessment  
[www.kytech.gov/padoc0405pdf](http://www.kytech.gov/padoc0405pdf)
7. Work-Based Learning Guide (2000), Kentucky Division of Career and Technical Education, Department for Technical Education.  
[www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Career+Technical+Education/Career+Technical+Ed+Resources/Work+Based+Learning+Guide.htm](http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Career+Technical+Education/Career+Technical+Ed+Resources/Work+Based+Learning+Guide.htm)